Settlement of media issues

1694.SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether all issues held up with the Ministry regarding media would be addressed soon, in consultation with all stake-holders;

(b) whether consensus on contentious issue of Content Code, projecting India in a positive light to the world during Commonwealth Games and devising an acceptable mechanism to resolve demands of print and broadcasting industry, would be considered; and

(c) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) to (c) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has constituted a media consultative committee for media facilitation under the Chairmanship of Secretary, I&B. The Committee includes media organisations, inclusive of both print and electronic media and also representatives of civil society.

The terms of reference of the Committee are as under:-

(i) To serve as a forum for regular consultations between Government and various professional media bodies.

(ii) To provide a platform for exchange of views on concerns of civil society.

(iii) To discuss concerns of media organisations on various regulatory/policy procedural matters.

(iv) The Committee will meet at least twice a year or as and when necessary. Wide consultations with stakeholders are required to arrive at broad consensus on the issue of Content Code. No time frame has been fixed for decision in the matter.

News and entertainment private TV channels

1695.SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of news and entertainment private T.V. channels functioning in the country;

(b) the number of applications pending for opening new such channels from Assam; and

(c) the details of reasons for pendency of such proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) As on date, the Ministry has permitted 233 news and current affairs TV channels and 247 non-news and current affairs TV channels under uplinking and downlinking guidelines.

(b) One.

(c) Non-receipt of full or additional information from the applicant and requirement of inter-Ministerial consultations are the main reasons of pendency.

Amendment of Cable Television Networks Regulation Act

1696. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal from the Maharashtra Government regarding amendment of the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995 is pending with the Ministry;

(b) whether it is a fact that the lacunae in the Act has made it possible for a cable operation to be used for assisting terrorist activities; and

(c) the difficulties in approving the proposal and by when the proposal would be settled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However the Government has noted certain aberrations in the live coverage of the operations conducted by security forces during the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai thereby endangering the locations, movements, etc. of security forces. The Ministry has issued a directive to all the News and Current Affairs TV channels on 27.11.2008 so as not to broadcast the movement, location, numbers, strategy and other operational details of the security forces as the TV coverage is likely to jeopardize the operations mounted by the security forces. The TV channels were also issued an advisory on 3rd December 2008 in this regard.

(c) The amendment of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 in the light of the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India regarding "restructuring of cable services" received by the Government are under consideration of the Government. The proposal of the State Government will also be taken into consideration while deciding the matter. No time frame could be given in such policy matters.

Working of Fast Track Courts

1697. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Fast Track Courts (FTCs) have been able to help expeditious disposal of criminal cases, that require early disposal;

(b) if so, the number of cases settled by FTCs, so far;

(c) the number of additional FTCs proposed to be constituted in 2009-10; and

(d) the types of cases which are referred to FTCs?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) Fast Track Courts have been set up for expeditious disposal of long pending cases in the Sessions Courts and